

COMMENTS

**U.S. NATURAL
RESOURCES
CONSERVATION
SERVICE**



Subject: NRCS assistance to CALFED WQ Program

Date: April 20, 1999

To: Judy Heath
CALFED Water Quality Program

File Code: 180

Judy, here is a first cut at identifying potential areas of involvement for NRCS with the Water Quality Program. Rather than trying to nail things down specifically at this time, I would rather work with you directly to refine this analysis so that it will be useful to you in developing your program's implementation plan.

Our first look indicates that we could be of assistance in helping to implement selected actions within the following program areas:

DRINKING WATER

Pathogens- source management associated with rangelands and animal production systems.

Total dissolved solids, salinity, turbidity and nutrients. Source Management

MERCURY

PESTICIDES

Diazinon and chlorpyrifos

SALINITY

Agricultural drainage and water management activities

SELENIUM

Agricultural sub surface drainage

Phytoremediation

Active land management

Upper watershed management

TURBIDITY AND SEDIMENTATION

Erosion Control and sediment management

EXISTING ACTIVITIES

NRCS currently provides both technical and financial assistance on private lands to assist land users (primarily within the agricultural sector) to address a variety of water quality concerns. We currently have Field Office staff assistance directly serving all counties within the state. NRCS has prioritized several areas of the state for Environmental Quality Incentive Program funding (EQIP). Of the annual appropriations for this program (\$5 to 8 million/yr) a full 60% of the funding is dedicated to addressing water quality concerns. The Sand and Salt Creek watershed project, westside Stanislaus County HUA, and activities in the Fall River Valley are examples of NRCS program assistance referred to in your Water Quality plan. We are also involved in a variety of phyto remediation activities in the San Joaquin Valley and numerous watershed activities (including Panoche-Silver Creek, Yuba River, American River, Tuolumne River, and others) that have water quality issues as primary considerations.

FUTURE INVOLVEMENT AND ACTIVITY LEADERSHIP

NRCS could possibly serve in a leadership for several program activities. Most of these activities identified in the program plan are activities where we are already engaged. I think I would feel much more comfortable discussing leadership roles with you directly, rather than coming up with a somewhat arbitrary list of suggested activities. Our ability to carry out new CALFED activities is of course constrained by our current budget limits.

If possible I'd like to get together with you within the next week or two, and get guidance from you on how to refine this analysis to better meet your specific short and long term needs.

Take care

John M. Lowrie.